Forests along Eastern Ghats

*412. SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE :

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the 150 km. stretch of Niligiri type canopy and deciduous forests along the Eastern Ghat, is threatened by the exploitation of large bauxite reserves of over 200 million tonnes estimated to be lying underground there; and

(b) if so, what steps are being taken to ensure preservation of the forests and the eco-system while exploiting the bauxite reserves?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) No, Sir. Approval under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for diversion of forest land for non-forestry purposes including for bauxite mining is accorded after considering all the relevant aspects including likely effect of mining on flora and fauna.

(b) Does not arise.

Release of Terrorists/Militants in Jammu and Kashmir

*413. SHRI RAM RATAN RAM:

SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of terrorists and militants released by Government to secure the release of those kidnapped by terrorists in Kashmir Valley during the years 1989, 1990, 19991 and so far in 1992; and

(b) the number of persons kidnapped by the militants and anti-social elements in the Kashmir Valley during the same period?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI S. B. CHAVAN): (a) (b) It would not be in the public interest to disclose this information.

Increase in rates of DTC Students Passes

*414. DR. ABRAR AHMED:

SHRI SURESH KALMADI:

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Delhi Transport Corporation proposes to effect a steep hike in the rates of students' but passes;

(b) if so, what is the percentage of rise in the rates of such passes; and

(c) whether there has been any agitation by students' Union against the proposed hike and if so, what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) to (c) The Delhi Transport Corporation has sent a proposal to the Government for revising the rate of all route students bus passes to 25 per cent of the rate of general all route passes. DTC have also submitted certain other proposals for plugging loopholes and preventing abuse of the system of student concessional passes.

Some Students Unions have voiced their objections against the proposals.

No final decision has been taken by Government on the proposals.

Rail Bridge over Hooghly River

*415. SHRI MD. SALIM: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal for the construction of a new rail

bridge over the Hooghly river near the existing bridge on Bandel Naihati Section;

(b) if so, what is the present status of the project; and

(c) what steps Government propose to take to expedite the matter?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) It is in planning stage.

(c) Priority of work depends on urgency compared to other proposals within the limited resources.

Arrangement for Cold Drinking Water for Train passengers

*416. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that most of the railway stations do not have adequate and satisfactory arrangefor cold drinking water for passengers;

(b) if so, what steps Government have taken or propose to take to ease the situation, particularly in the summer season;

(c) whether cold drinking water is made available in all classes of sleeper coachess; and

(d) if not, the steps being taken in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF): (a) and (b) A railway station is considered for provision of water cooler if electricity and piped water supply are available and atleast 1000 or more passengers per day detrain/entrain at the station. Out of 1453 stations eligible for provision of water coolers as per the above norms, 1272 stations have already been provided with water coolers. 108 more stations have been selected for provision of water cooler during the year 1992-93. The balance eligible stations to be covered in subsequent years are subject to availability of the funds.

(c) and (d) A few selected trains were provided with split unit type mechanical water coolers as an experimental measure. As the fitment of these type of water coolers on coaches was done for the first time, a number of teething problems in regard to maintenance and their operation have been experienced. The service trials are still continuing.

Deepening of Visakhapatnam Port

*417. DR. NARREDDY THULASI REDDY:
SHRI MOHD. KHALEELUR RAHMAN:

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration for deepening of the Visakhapatnam Port to receive vessels of 1,70,000 DWT capacity for exporting iron ore; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Express Buses to State Capitals

*418. SHRI TINDIVANAM G. VENKATARAMAN: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to run express buses to various State Capitals;

(b) if so, by when the same is likely to be implemented; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?